ANTIDOTE

AGAINST THE

ERRONEOUS,

OR RATHER

BLASPHEMOUS,

Opinions of ſome People in this Our Corrupt AGE;

Concerning the True and Real Cauſe of Man's falling into thoſe Groſs and Notorious Sins, which do commonly prove his Eternal Ruine.

Made plain in a ſhort Diſcourſe, being the ſubſtance of Two Sermons upon the 13, 14, 15. Verſes of the 1ſt Chap. of St. *James. Let no Man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God*, &c.

By SAMUEL D'ASSIGNY, *a Well-wiſher to the Church of England's Proſperity.*

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The Preface,

Christian Reader,

HAving not in all my few labours and studies either heard of, or met with any entire Treatise of this kind or nature, and daily perceiving the Spirit of Dissention beyond Measure Operating amongst the generality of Mankind, so that if it were possible he would beguile and seduce the very Elect: I thought fit therefore upon a serious Consideration, to endeavour to put a stop to the malicious Project of the Devil, who is incessantly striving to draw men headlong into Eternal Perdition with himself, especially by insinuating into them some blasphemous thoughts of the Almighty, according to that which you'll find mention'd in the following Discourse, viz. That he has appointed some on purpose, as it were, for the endless Torments of Hell, as well as others for the Enjoyment of Everlasting Bliss; and that (they being so voluntarily predestinated) if they did use all imaginable means, there can be no hopes or possibility of a repeal; which in my opinion, is a very great Blasphemy, to think of so Wise and Merciful a God as ours is, who did not only vouchsafe to send his only begotten Son Christ Jesus, to be a Propitiatory Sacrifice for all our Sins, but has left his plain written Word, whereby if Men had but Grace to Read and Practice it, they might be easily convinced of such wicked Imaginations: He has also granted a Redemption and Deliverance from all Sins whatsoever, except that against the Holy Ghost, provided that Men will timely and sincerely perform the Conditions upon which they are promised. My Courteous Reader, I shall not here trouble my self with a second Exposition, but if you please diligently to peruse the following Treatise, I hope, through God's Grace, you'll find full satisfaction concerning the whole Point: Besides, you will find many other wicked conceits about the same Matter, and all of them singly opposed and confuted by the plain Word of God: Therefore I shall not here take time to reckon them up in their Order; neither will I recommend it to the protection of any particular Person, presuming that it may be material enough in it self to Challenge a Patronage from all those that are any way concerned for the Interest and Honour of their Maker.

Now, my Christian Reader, I have no more to add, for the better offering of it to thy kind acceptation, but only this seasonable Admonition, viz. Be not too curious, too inquisitive, in searching after those things, which God is not pleased to Communicate to any humane Capacity, according to that excellent Maxim in Philosophy, quæ supra nos, nihil ad nos; But yet above all, be careful and diligent to know and understand those things which especially belong to thy Spiritual and Eternal Welfare, always remembring that no Man can be too circumspect in a business of so great a Moment; which that you, and I, and all may do, God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c. Farewel,

S. D.

An Antidote againſt the Erroneous, or rather Blaſphemous, Opinions of ſome People in this our Corrupt Age, &c.

James 1ſt. 13, 14, 15. Verſes.

Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man.

But every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Luſt and enticed.

Then when Luſt hath conceived it bringeth Sin, and Sin when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth Death.

ALthough all Scripture are inſpired by one and the ſame Spirit of Truth, yet have they an accidental difference, according to the Nature of the *Pen-men* that did firſt indite them, ſome being of a higher, others of a lower Style; ſome hard and intricate, others more plain and eaſie to be underſtood.

And this, I preſume, it was that occaſioned St. *Gregory* to compare ſome Scriptures unto *Jacob*'s haſty Rods, which were partly peeled, and partly covered; others unto *Acab*'s houſe of Ivory, which was without any covering at all.

The Scripture which I have now mentioned unto you, is of the former ſort, hard and difficult to be underſtood: It craveth therefore your beſt attention whilſt it is interpreted, and your chiefeſt affection when it is applyed; I will firſt briefly and plainly, as I can, lay down the general heads, and afterwards come unto the particulars.

1. We have here a full and compleat propoſition, *viz.* That God is not the mover unto evil, nor the author of Sin:

Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.

2. The Apoſtle confirms and ſtrengthens this propoſition by two Arguments in the following Words. The firſt whereof is drawn from the

 purity

purity of God's divine Nature, and is partly Negative, and partly Affirmative.

1. Negative, *He cannot be tempted with Evil.*

2. Affirmative, *He tempteth no Man.*

2. The second Argument is drawn from the Corruption of Man's own Nature, arising out of the verse following, where the Apostle setteth down the true and efficient Cause of Sin, which is our own concupiscence and desire; *For every man is tempted when he is drawn by his own Lust and enticed.*

And in the next place, by a kind of gradation, he proceeds further to shew us our Corruption, *in semine*, *in germine*, *in fructu*, in the seed, in the bud, in the fruit.

In the seed there is, *concupiscentia titillans*, pleasing concupiscence, in the bud there is, *concupiscentia provocans*, willing concupiscence, and in the fruit there is, *concupiscentia proveniens*, actual concupiscence: And then follows the effect which this bitter Root doth produce, and that is Death; *When Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin being finished bringeth forth Death* and Destruction, both to Body and Soul.

These are parts that I chiefly design to insist upon, that I may thereby vindicate the Honour and Justice of God, from the Blasphemous thoughts of wicked and obstinate People.

This Proposition is the first point, that God is not the Mover unto Evil, nor the Author of Sin: A point, I must needs confess, very hard and intricate, if rightly weighed and considered; and if we take it in its full latitude, it will bring us to understand, if it were possible to be comprehended, how far God hath a hand in the actions of sinning: A point so high as the highest Heavens, and dwelleth in Light as unsearchable as God himself, covered with a Curtain of Sacred secresy, which shall never be drawn aside; for who is able to apprehend (that hath his habitation here upon Earth, and his dwellings amongst us Mortals) how far the Council of God goeth in ordering and disposing of sinful actions.

The *Manichees* were here driven to such a strait, that they fram'd two Gods unto themselves, to the end that they might acquit one from being accessary unto Evil. 1. They called a good God the Father of Christ, and the Author of the New Testament; But the other they surmised to be Evil, and the Author of the Old. And this they say was he, who is said to have hardened *Pharoah*'s heart, to bid *Shemei* curse *David*; and lastly to have delivered the Gentiles unto a reprobate sense, *Rom.* 1. 24. But, alas! foolish men, they were deceived, for the Apostle tells us plainly, *Eph.* 4. 6. That there is but one Lord, and one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

And

And St. *James* saith here in the Text that he is ἀπείρατος one that cannot be moved or tempted unto Evil: But I will leave this Error of theirs, and come nearer unto our selves: There is a great Error about this point, and I suppose it to be in two extreams.

The 1st is of those who maliciously charge God to be the Author of Sin; these are the sensual Libertines of our Age, who rub their filthiness and Uncleanness upon God's Purity.

2dly, The others are those who think that God doth only suffer and permit sin; and so they make to exhibit a Christ, sitting upon a Scaffold, to behold a Stage-play; or as if his Counsel were bound up, and restrained like Samson's Arms, that he could not act.

Either of these Opinions do seem to clear the Godhead it self, the one destroying the Greatness and Infinity of the Deity in that they charge God to be the author of Sin; the other his Omnipotence and Providence in that they bereave him of a great part of his Honour.

The latter of these positions is very true, that God doth permit sin, and found and Catholick enough if more were added unto it, as you shall find in the explication of the point in hand: But the other is filled to the brim with monstrous Impiety: for if the very damned Spirits in Hell might be heard to speak against God, what could they say to deprave him more than this?

Indeed the very best of us all, no doubt, have sinned, and that most presumptuously too, and have most highly violated the Sacred Laws of our Maker: But that God caused us so to do, is, I say, a most damnable and reprobate Thought, that any Vessel of Clay can conceive of his Maker, who is absolutely good, and neither is, nor can be, tempted with evil.

And yet our Adversaries, the Papists, have not stuck to father the birth of this prodigious Monster upon our Church it self, by affirming that we maintain it as a point of Doctrine, that God is the Mover unto evil, and so consequently the Author of sin: I say our Church never affirm'd it, and to redeem a thousand Deaths if more were due unto our sins, we would not.

'Tis true, this we say, that whatsoever hath substance, being and perfection in the action of sin, God is the Author of it, because it is good, and proceedeth from him *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 28. Our life, our motion, our being is from God; he is, *Anima Mundi*, the very Life and Soul of the World. A Poet of the Gentiles did first deliver it, but now an Apostle of ours hath ratified it, and sanctified it for a truth. Our Life is God's, whether we live to him as we ought to do, or to the Lusts of the Flesh, or after the pleasure of the God of this World, the Prince of Darkness. Our Motion is his, whether we lift up our hands to Prayer, or to Murther, or to Stealth, or any other Out-rage. Our Essence is

alſo God's, the nature, being, and ſubſtance of men, of reprobate Angels, and others are from him, and his good Creatures, for he made all things good, and not evil. So that ſtill I ſay, God, thus far, is a worker in Temptation, or may be ſaid to have a hand in Sinning: for in ſin, you muſt know, there is a poſitive and peccative part, nature and corruption, action and defect; now God is the Author of the former, but not of the latter: As for Example, in the ſtriking of a jarring and untuned inſtrument, the ſtriking and fingering is from the Perſon, but the jarring & diſcord is in the Inſtrument: So God is the Author of every action, but not of wickedneſs in any action. But would you ſee it yet more plain by an example out of the Book of God, then let *Cain* be the man, *Gen.* 4. 5. we read that becauſe *Cain*'s Sacrifice was rejected, and his Brother's accepted, he was exceeding wrath, his countenance fell, and he had a purpoſe to ſlay his Brother: Now *Cain* could never have thought of the death of *Abel*, his eyes could never have ſeen any offenſive thing in his accepted Sacrifice, nor his heart have proſecuted with deſire, nor his hands have executed with power ſo unnatural a fact, if God had not given him ſtrength and activity to have uſed the ſervice of all theſe faculties.

To think, to deſire, to move the parts of the Body, are the good Creatures of God, and therein conſiſteth the action of God: But to turn theſe gifts of God unto ſo wicked, and vile a purpoſe, as to murther his Brother, was the ſin of *Cain* himſelf, the fault of the action proper to him alone. And ſo in all our motions and actions God hath a hand in them, as far as they are righteous and good, but as they are evil and ſinful, they chiefly proceed from the impure fountains of our hearts, for God can no way be touch'd with evil.

2. God may be ſaid to move unto Evil, *per privationem gratiæ ſuæ*, by withdrawing his Grace; and in this ſence ſaith St. *Auſtin*, God is ſaid to give over unto a reprobate ſence, to harden, to blind, to tempt unto evil: *Non quod hæc a Deo fiant, quippe cum à propriis hominibus malitia provenient, ſed quiâ Deo juſtè homines deſerente, hæc illis contingunt*, Not that theſe things are done by God himſelf, for they proceed from the malice of men, but becauſe while he doth fully forſake men for their obſtinacy and rebellion againſt him, theſe things do commonly overtake them. And to the ſame purpoſe is that of St. *Auſtin*, *Indurare dicitur Deus quem non miſeretur*, God is ſaid to harden whom he will not mollifie, *Excæcare quem illuminare noluerit*, and to blind them whom he will not illuminate; ſo he hardned *Pharaoh*'s heart, and blinded the falſe Prophets.

Neither may we here arraign God of injuſtice, becauſe it is lawful for him to do what he pleaſeth with his own: He hath power over his Clay, to make of it at his pleaſure, either in Judgement, a veſſel of Diſhonour, or in Mercy, a Veſſel of Honour: And the Clay may not ſay to the Potter, why haſt thou made me thus or thus.

3. God may be said to move unto evil by offering occasions and objects, to try whether a Man will sin or not: As for Example, A Master suspecting his Servant to be false and thievish, lays something of considerable value in his way, to try if he will steal it, which if he does, the Master having found his theft, will not only expose him to the world for a Rogue and Deceiver, but will for ever after suspect his fidelity and trust; now this Tryal is no sin in the Master, tho' the theft be a great one in the Servant: Even so it is with God, we must not fasten any injustice on him, because he tryeth and proveth us by occasions and objects, for these are things good in themselves, tho' we pervert them unto evil ends.

Moses wrought many signs and wonders in the Land of *Egypt*, which were good in themselves, and yet proved as means to harden *Pharoah*'s heart, not so intended by God, but so perverted by his malicious temper. Thus we see that the Wicked and Blasphemous Opinions of those who make God to be the Author of sin, and so charge him with our impieties, are absolutely false, for he is not evil himself, neither tempteth he any Man unto evil.

I come now to the second Opinion, viz. of those who make God to be the only sufferer and permitter of evil, which I confess is but an Error of humanity, many offending herein rather through infirmity than malice: They speak a truth of God, when they acknowledge his permission of sin, but not the whole truth, because they think he only permitteth it, and so they make him an idle spectator of all our actions: But for our sure proceeding herein, let us take along with us these three Notes, viz. That God doth *praescire, permittere, & ordinare peccatum*, foresee, permit, and dispose of the sinful actions of Men.

1. He foreseeth sin, he foresaw the iniquity of *Esau*, long before his being, and the sentence of reprobation was denounced against him before he had done *either good or evil*, Rom. 9. 11. He foretold the infidelity of the Jews, (saith St. *Austine*) and their malicious purpose in complotting the Death of the Son of God: What of that? *praedixit non fecit*, he only foretold it, but did not work it: *Videndo enim* (saith *Lipsius*) *fol videbat non cogit facienda ne fando, praedicit, non perficit*: He saw it from all Eternity, but he only saw it, enforced it not, knew it, decreed it not, foretold it, prescribed it not.

2. As the Lord foreseeth sin, and yet is not the author of evil, so he permitteth sin to be done in the World: He suffered the *Amorites* to go on in their wickedness, and telleth *Abraham* that it was not yet full, *Gen.* 15. 16. He suffered *Shimei* to curse *David*, as we read in the 16*th Chap.* 2*d* Book of *Samuel*: I omit several other places of Scripture, of no less importance, because it is so true, that it needs no proof, for there is nothing visibly or sensibly done within the compass of the whole World, which is not either commanded or tolerated from the Court of the highest Emperor. He

He ſuffers his own Children to be tempted, that they may not be exalted above meaſure, and that they may know the Power of the Lord, and the proof of his Armour.

And thus he ſuffers the wicked alſo to go on in their wickedneſs, that their Condemnation may be greater.

3. As he foreſeeth and permitteth evil, ſo he ordereth and diſpoſeth of it, as ſeemeth beſt to his Godly Wiſdom, for as he is a moſt holy Creator of good Natures, ſo he is a moſt righteous diſpoſer, of the evil wills and ſinful actions of Mankind.

Look upon that unnatural ſin in ſelling *Joſeph* into *Egypt*, and you ſhall ſee it there ſo plainly delivered, that no man need to doubt, I will not take time to recite the whole Hiſtory, the words, which eſpecially make to our preſent purpoſe, are theſe in the 45 Chap. Gen. 5th Verſe. *It was not you that ſent me hither, but God*, and at the 50th Chap. of the ſame Book and 20th Verſe, *Ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs as it is this day, to ſave much People alive.* Obſerve, they thought evil, God diſpoſeth it unto good, their minds were wholly bent with malice and envy towards their Brother, whilſt God's providence was working how to ſerve them in a famine, and to ſave much People alive. Thus you ſee that the Lord doth not only foreſee and permit evil to be done in the World, but in the very doing of it, his Providence is buſy, how to order and diſpoſe of it, that he may bring it to ſome good Event: I will now join all theſe three together, *viz.* The Pre-ſcience, the Permiſſion and Providence of God in the action of ſinning, and ſo couch them under one Example, and that ſhall be in the ſeducement and fall of *Ahab*, as we have it in the 22d Chap. of the firſt Book of *Kings*, at the 19th Verſe; It is a place, I muſt needs confeſs, that hath been ſtrongly urg'd to tax God of injuſtice, for it ſeems God did not only permit the falſe Spirits to ſeduce *Ahab*, but giveth encouragement alſo, ſaying, *thou ſhalt prevail*, adding a commandment *go forth*, and likewiſe allowing of the form of acting in the matter *do ſo*.

Now that you may know how innocent God is in an action of ſuch a prejudice, obſerve well the circumſtances of the place, and the thing intended, the thing deſigned was that *Ahab* ſhould fall at *Ramoth Gilead*: and concerning the means, inquiry was made, who ſhould entice *Ahab*, becauſe it was not in the nature of God himſelf to effect it, therefore that which he doth, he doth by a falſe Spirit, one of *Satan*'s Band and Retinue.

But obſerve alſo, God infuſeth no miſchief into the Spirit, he comes furniſhed of himſelf, for when one ſaid thus, and another thus, he proffered his ſervice, ſaying, I will entice him, when God demanded the means, he invented the practice, I will be, ſaith he, a falſe Spirit in the mouth of his Prophets.

Now

Now what were these Prophets of *Ahab*? they were a faithless Generation, whose guile it was, either for reward or favour of the King to fay they had dreamed, when it was not so, and that the Lord had said it when he never spake it; so you see there is both Malice in the Spirit, and falsehood in the Prophets, before God had any hand in the Matter: Therefore what doth the Lord therein? Why, he sitteth upon the Throne as the Judg and Moderator of the whole Action; He Commandeth the Attendance of all the Army of Heaven on the Right Hand, and on the Left, both clean and unclean Spirits are in Subjection unto him: He giveth leave then unto the Spirit, who, without his permission is unable to do any thing.

That the evil Spirit [illegible] then he giveth the Success, which all the Devils in Hell, could not effect, if he would have resisted it: Therefore saith he *Go forth*, and then he biddeth him go, and he goes; run, and he runs: And [illegible] he deposeth the Counsel, do so, *i.e.* do so, and no more than so, which is much, as if he had said, I see that all Malice to bestow, I will permit, yea rather than any Malice and falsehood to abide, power shall fall upon the four hundred Prophets of *Ahab*, rather than upon [illegible] one of my Prophets of mine: And let the fall of *Ahab* be at *Ramoth-Gilead*, rather than at any other place; And in this Battle with the King of *Aram*, rather than at any other time. Thus when the Matter is thus [illegible] God doth the Ordaining and Ordering thereof, in some sort to [illegible] effects, time, and place, and other the like particulars.

I hope by this the you are sufficiently convinced, that in the Actions of sinful Men there is more to be deem'd of God than his bare permission: for doubtless he hath His will therein, mistake me not I beseech you, I mean not [illegible], as if the Lord did either Allure, Counsel, or Compel unto Evil: But I mean *Voluntatem Decretoriam*, *His Decretive Will*, whereby the Lord doth order and govern sinful Actions in applyment them to better ends, than the Offenders are aware of: For God [illegible], his Soul hateth and abhorreth Sin, and condemneth Sin, his [illegible] down Angels [illegible], for [illegible] own sinful Wills, [illegible] own sinful Ends.

[illegible] and will [illegible] threatned. Therefore [illegible] and that [illegible] Visible Pillars upon [illegible]

If then his indignation against Sin be such, Who can accuse him to be the Author of it.

Let God then be true, and let all Men be Lyars, let God be just, and let all Men be sinners; Let him be justified in his sayings, and then let all his accusers vanish and Confusion seize upon them like the foam upon the Waters. But as for those that love, [illegible] the Lord, let them stand fast as Mount Sion, which [illegible] Let them stand fast in Love, fast in Faith, [illegible] fast not from that they keep his Commandments, [illegible] Grace, fast in hope, that [illegible] that they shall one day enjoy the [illegible] Heaven for evermore.

And now I am come to the first [illegible] here to prove the [illegible] the purity of God's Divine Nature [illegible] firmative:

First, Negative, And therein the Apostle denyeth God to be tempted with evil.

Secondly, Affirmative, And therein he averreth that he tempted no man.

I shall begin first with the Negative part, [illegible] As if the Apostle should have said here, God is so pure, that he cannot be stained; in Will so stable, that he cannot be moved; in Wisdom so wise, that he cannot be deceived; and in Liberty so free, that he cannot be compelled unto Evil; He is Light, and there is no Darkness, neither of Error or Ignorance, in him; He is goodness, and there is no evil in him, which can contaminate or defile his divine Nature; He is good *essentialy*, in himself, and without himself, in himself, as being the Fountain of all Goodness, for there is no Goodness upon Earth, but what is derived from him; In which sense our Saviour saith [illegible] God; He is *Bonitas*, Goodness it self, His Nature is Goodness, and from him, as from a vast Ocean, flow all the streams of Goodness into the World; He is essentially good without himself, I mean unto all his Creatures in general, whether you consider him in his Creation, or in his Preservation of them.

1. In his Creation, there was not a Work that passed his fingers without the approbation of his Judgement, *Behold it was good, and very good, and God saw that it was good*, Gen. 1. 10.

2. In his Preservation; *He he opened his hands, and filleth all things with his Blessings, the whole Earth is full of his Goodness*, (saith the Psalmist) *his Mercies are over all his Works. He is also exceeding good unto his chosen, and to his Israel, unto those that are of a pure heart*, Psal. 73. 1.

Do you distrust of his righteousness? Ask as proud and obdurate a sinner as ever transgressed, *Pharaoh* by name, and he will tell you, that the Lord is righteous, though he and his people were wicked, *Exod.* 9. 27.

Ask but the meanest of Israel Wisdom, and they will inform you in this behalf. *The Question* [illegible] *of him, that God by no means is unjust, but as it is impossible he should be.* [illegible] *the Question, why the Gods do good? Answereth himself, Because* [illegible] *their Nature is the cause, they neither take, nor do wrong, they neither give, nor have mischief in them.*

[illegible] *me now to the second Assertion, viz.* As he is in Nature so pure, [illegible] *himself, to* [illegible] *tempteth he no man, neither is he delighted unto* [illegible] *approve of it,* [illegible] *saith the* [illegible] *shall not*

[illegible] *more meant unto us, now even then when it is committed, towards the committers of it, because his Counsels so good, that he can after temptation, bring* [illegible] *unto evil, yet even then certainly is he* [illegible] *Nahum* [illegible] *which St. Austin hath to this purpose,* [illegible] *occasiones temporum, ne eos occasio decipiat, &c.* [illegible] *be tempted, or be given up to sin, through whom the occasion of sinning presents it self, if he did truly and properly tempt them, he would not cease to wait to raise them up by Gods Grace, that they might not fall into despair, if* [illegible] *by him ordained to fall, for*

[illegible] *God tempt no man into evil? why then may some say) do the Scriptures seem to speak directly to this purpose? why is it said of God, Exod.* [illegible] *that he hardened Pharaohs heart? and that he hardened the People? And Exod.* [illegible] *we read that Pharaohs heart was hardened, neither did he harden it? And Rom.* [illegible] *it is said of the Gentiles, that God delivered them up unto a reprobate sense: Nay, the Prophet Isaiah* [illegible] *God to his face, in the 63d Chap. at the 10th Verse, Then said I, O Lord God, thou hast deceived this People and Jerusalem, saying, ye shall have Peace, whereas the Sword toucheth unto the Soul.*

And the Lord himself in plainer terms speaketh it upon himself, *Ezek.* 14. 9. *If the Prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet.* And in the 2d Chap. 2 Epist. to the *Thess.* at the 11th Verse, *God shall send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a lye.*

If so, how doth our Apostle speak a truth here, when he saith *God tempteth no man into evil*

For

For the better explication of these mysterious Expressions, and withal to make it appear unto you, how God shall be just, and yet both the natures and workers of such wickedness shall be ashamed before him: Take, I beseech you, seriously these two things into your Christian consideration.

First, That in all the Scriptures before alledged, the rest is ever made of some precedent Iniquity in those ungracious Persons, which God so dealeth with, deserving, and procuring the hand of God thus heavily upon them.

Hath God hardned *Pharaoh*, surely *Pharaoh* hardned himself, *Exod.* 8. 32. *Duritiæ ejus Hominum reccatum Origo fuit Duritiæ*; so it was with this Obstinate Sinner, saith S. *Augustine*, *Judicium Dei fequitur Hominum delictum*, God's Judgment, but *Pharaoh* first hardned himself by his sins. Will he give over the Gentiles to a reprobate sense? They first did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Look into the first of the *Rom.* at 23, and you shall find the Apostle to Answer in God's behalf, that it was for the abominations of their former Lusts, or because they changed the truth of God into a lie, worshipp'd the Creature more than the Creator, and changed the glory of an incorruptible God into the Image of a corruptible Man, and whatsoever were they misled with strong delusions, but because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved.

Thus God as a just Judge, finding the Heart of Man to be wholly bent upon Wickedness, doth inflict upon him spiritual Judgments of induration, slumber, blindness, or the like punishments, for which Sin is plagu'd with Sin, as it is many times in the Wisdom of God whereby he governeth the World, that it is not *Peccatum* but *Supplicium*, not Sin, but Judgment; Thus St. *Augustine* speaking of the hardning of *Pharaoh*'s Heart, he thus concludeth, *Cum dicitur Deus Cor Pharaonis duravit, ipsum Malum Cordis ejus, quod Deus non fecit, quia Malum est, ipsum Malum Cordis ejus Deus fecit, quia Malorum Justus Ultor est*, God is not the Author of Sin, as it is Sin, but as it is the punishment of those former sins, which we have so presumptuously committed against his Divine Majesty.

But (2dly,) The second thing which we would have you consider is this, That whatsoever God doth in the Action or sinning, as in hardning of *Pharaoh*'s Heart, or any other the like Instances, he doth it only by infusing any Wickedness into their Hearts, as he found no Wickedness in the Heart of *Pharaoh*, there was Infidelity, Obstinacy and Rebellion, before God did any thing in the matter, as evident appears by that Speech of his unto *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Exod.* 5. 2. *Who is the Lord that I should hearken unto his Voice, and let* Israel *go*, *I know not the Lord, neither will I let* Israel *go*.

Thus

Thus Reader, as this Doctrine hath been sufficiently proved, suffer the Instructions, (I beseech thee) arising from thence to be effectually enforced.

In the first place then, if God be not the mover unto evil, or the author of sin, as the Apostle here affirmeth, then let no man attribute his sin unto God, by saying, God moved me to do thus or thus: For *perditio tua ex te*, O *Israel*, thy sin is of thy self, and thou art the cause of thy own ruine.

We cannot but be sensible that it is a great wickedness of this present Age too, too heathenish to impute the fault when they have sinned unto the Stars and Planets, by saying they were born under a Malignant Planet, and that the Stars had fore-signed their going awry: But to this St. *Austin* answers, and saith, *that the Grace of God doth not only excell all the Stars and Planets in Heaven, but also controlleth the very Angels and Devils in Hell.* And if you look into the 10*th* Chap. of *Jeremiah* at the 2*d* Verse, you shall not only find this judicial Astrology to be condemned as a heathenish invention, but also the People of God to be forewarned that they should not relye upon such vain signs and constellations.

2*dly*, Others there be which stick not at this only, but reach more immediately at God himself, by saying, God would have it thus, and thus; and if God would not, I could not have done it, for who can resist his power.

Thus, when they have spilt the blood of the innocent, like water upon the ground, defiled their Neighbours beds, and provoked Heaven with many presumtuous sins, as Rapes, Robberies, Murthers, Treasons, and the like; they will spue out a Blasphemy against God himself, by countenancing their sins under his authority; and by pleading that they have done but the will of God, in committing such wickedness against him.

'Tis true, but it is a will, against his will, that because they did not value or regard that which God had publickly enjoyned them, they should do another thing which he had privately determined; and he that fulfilleth the will of God in this manner, or rather the will of God is fulfilled upon him, will certainly, without timely and unfeigned repentance, perish unto all Eternity.

I am now come to the second Argument, which the Apostle produceth here to prove his former proposition, which is drawn from the corruption of Man's own Nature, arising out of these words, *but every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.*

As if the Apostle should have said here, that every Mans falling into any Sin, comes from Himself, his own treacherous sinful Appetite inticeth, and tenders him some delusive carnal baits, and so consequently by them draws him out of his Course, and entices him unto sin.

God then is not the Mover, nor the Author, nor the perfecter of any evil Action, that proceeds partly from our own Corruption and partly from the Suggestions of Satan: for our Natures being through the fall of our first Parents corrupted, our desires are defiled, and being defiled rebel against the Light and dictates of right Reason and so hurry us on headlong unto all unlawfulness to draw us quite with cords of Vanity and (as it were with Cart-ropes).

Now what shall we say, that God is the cause of this Original Corruption, nay no, *But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.*

God placed Man at first in a perfect state of Holiness, Light, and Purity, and in a Glory, for he made him pure in his Body, pure in his Soul, and pure in his [illegible] Soul,

1. For his Body, though it was formed out of the Duſt, yet we muſt conſider, that the Earth was not then corrupted, nor at that time infected, the Corruption came afterwards through the fall of *Adam*, when that curſe of God was laid upon it by reaſon of *Adams* Sin; *Curſed is the Earth for thy ſake*, Gen. 3. 17. *In ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, Thorns alſo and Thiſtles ſhall it bring forth unto thee*: Before that, Man was free, and had a poſſibility to live for ever.

2. For his Soul, it was moſt divine and heavenly, (*Divinâ particulâ Auræ*) being a ſpark of Divinity infuſed by God himſelf, who breathed into Man the breath of Life, and made it ſpiritual like unto himſelf: It was not of the Eſſence of God, for then it ſhould have been equal with God, but it was ſuch a workmanſhip, as did reſemble him in true holineſs and perfect integrity.

3. As for the faculties of his Soul, they were likewiſe pure, his reaſon and underſtanding was clear, without any blindneſs or imperfection at all; His will was free from all Bondage, Coaction, or Compulſion whatſoever, ſo that none but himſelf could have brought any inconveniencies, or damage unto himſelf.

There's no fault then upon Gods ſide poſſibly to be found, no hard meaſure offer'd by him: He gave unto Man all things neceſſary and commodious for a pleaſant and an happy life, he gave him liberty and freedom to ſtand, what more could he deſire? It was miſerable Man then, that was the cauſe of his own ruine, who abuſed that power which God had given him, by ſuffering the Devil that great Enemy of Mankind, who always Enveighed at his proſperity, to beguile and poyſon him with an Apple, not by force, but by deceit, working on the Woman, the weaker Veſſel, ſhe being poyſoned, poyſoneth her Husband, and the poyſon being contagious; ſpreads it ſelf through all the faculties both of Body and Soul, and that deadly too: For ſo God had ſaid before, *in the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely dye*, Gen. 2, 17. *Man was now after all this, ſubject unto all infirmities, his Body to the Temporal, his Soul unto the Spiritual and eternal Death.*

There is neither Diſeaſe of the Body, nor Sickneſs of the Soul, but what came in with Sin, not unto *Adam* only, but unto us his Offſpring; for though at firſt he only ſinned, yet we are culpable through his Fact, and it is derived unto us both by imputation and propagation.

1. By imputation, ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, Rom. 4, 19. *By one Man's diſobedience many were made Sinners.*

2. By Propagation, *Ezek.* 18, 2. *The Fathers have eaten ſour Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are ſet on edge.*

So that now (our natures being corrupted) the ſoundneſs and integrity of all the faculties therein are diſeaſed, the Image of God is wholly defaced, the Soul is taken up with a Maſs of Injuſtice, and we are ſubject to a neceſſity of Sinning.

For

For as it was true of Man in the State of Innocency, *Potest non peccare*, he might if he would, not have Sinned, becauſe God left him in the hands of his own Counſels, and gave him liberty both ways, either to Sin, or not to Sin; So now it is true in the State of Corruption, *non poteſt non peccare*, he cannot chooſe but ſin; the whole lump of his Nature being ſour'd with that antient Leaven; nor ſhall he ever be delivered from that Corruption, whereunto he is Subject, until he attains unto the State of glorification, wherein it ſhall as certainly be verified, *non poteſt peccare*, he cannot Sin, though he would, corruption having put on incorruption, both in Body and Soul.

Which neceſſity of Sinning in the mean time is not in any external cauſe, but in the decayed Nature of Man, upon the fall whereof cometh Vanity in the Mind, and a frowardneſs in the Will, to depart from the living God.

Thus then you ſee the immediate cauſe of Sin, to be our own corruption and concupiſcenſe, which draweth us away from the rules of Reaſon, and the right Paths of Gods commandments: nor is this true only in the wicked and reprobate, but even in the deareſt Children of God; They are not free from this Original infection, they have many combats and conflicts in them.

There is *Iſhmael* againſt *Iſaac*, the Fleſh againſt the Spirit continually ſtriving; S. *Paul* himſelf complained hereof, Rom. 7, 23. *He found one Law in his Mind, another in his Members, ſtriving againſt the Law of his Mind*, and leading him from that which was true, juſt, and holy, unto the contrary which he did not allow of.

Thus then we ſtill ſee the former propoſition to be very true, *viz.* That God is not the mover unto Evil, nor the Author of Sin, but every Man is Tempted when he is drawn away by his own Luſt and enticed. For there is an abſolute Antipathy betwixt God and Sin, as being contrary to his divine Nature, which is pure and holy. Let no Man then ſay at any time, when he is tempted unto evil, God cauſed him to err, for he hath no need of Sinful Man; The Lord hateth all abomination of Errour, and they that fear God, love it not, ſaith the Son of *Syrach*, *Eccles.* 15. 11, 12. Again in the laſt Verſe of that Chapter he hath Commanded no man to do wickedly, neither hath he given any man a Licenſe to Sin.

In the laſt place, this Doctrine may teach us all not to ſuffer our ſelves at any time to be drawn away by our own Luſt and Concupiſcence; not to hearken to the dictates of our own corrupt Natures, but to endeavour with all immaginable reſiſtance to oppoſe thoſe unruly Motions, and evil inclinations, which do daily tempt and ſolicite us to violate the ſacred Laws of our Maker.

In a word, whenſoever the Devil ſhall aſſault us by any manner of Temptation, let us I beſeech you both remember and practiſe what S. *Peter* hath preſcribed unto us 1. *Peter* 5. 9. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the Faith, and by how*

much

much the Devil is more watchful for his Prey, let us I beseech you, be so much the more watchful unto prayer to withstand him.

It is good Advice, which the Wiseman gives, *viz.* That we should give the water no Passage, no not a little; so we should give as small an entrance unto Satan as possibly may be, for let but one foul Spirit enter and rest a while in thy Soul, and by and by Legions will be there, and then Satan will be like the Centurions Servant in one part, but not in the other; bid him come and he comes presently, but bid him go and he will not be gone without much ado, for if you once give him an Inch, he'll be sure to take an Ell.

Let us therefore *(obstare principiis)* withstand him in the beginning of his assaults, and stifle our sins in their first conception, before they are brought forth into action, for *when once Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death*, death and destruction both to body and soul, and a final rejection from God and all divine Mercies, which man by sin hath justly deserved from the hand of his Creator.

I might indeed here enlarge a great deal more, but I think it needless having made out the main points of the Text, and answered all the objections that might possibly have been brought to oppose it.

So I beseech all that bear the name of Christians, to abandon every wicked conceit, or opinion of their Maker, and likewise not to be any way concerned for the non-apprehension of those sublime mysteries, which he doth not think either profitable, or convenient for us to be acquainted with: But let us all unanimously joyn in the diligent fulfilling this most seasonable and excellent advice of *Solomon*, Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the Whole Duty of Man; This is indeed the Will of God, and the end of all our obligations to him, with which we are charged, and to which we are all enjoyned: But as for the Books of God's Councils and secret Decrees which are clasped up, that no man may read them, let us leave them unto the Lamb and blessed Trinity; But those of *Moses*, and the Prophets, of Christ, and his Apostles, are written for our Instruction, and for our Posteritie's after us. These let us search, and inquire into with all imaginable care and diligence, and with reverence and submission, let us with the Prophet *David* Meditate upon them day, and Night, that hereby our Sinful Souls may be amended, and saved finally in the day of our Lord *Jesus*. *Amen*.

FINIS.